

Healthy Eating Workshop

Basic Strategies for Healthy Eating

Workshop outline (60 minutes)

1. Welcome (10 minutes)
2. MyPlate (10 minutes)
3. Whole versus Processed Foods (30 minutes)
4. Let's Practice (5 minutes)
5. Closing (5 minutes)

Suggested handout:

[NYC Healthy Plate Planner](#)

1. Welcome (10 minutes)

Slide 1:



A. Introduction

Welcome to today's healthy eating workshop. My name is <insert facilitator name>. The topic of today's workshop is Basic Strategies for Healthy Eating.

Ask participants to fill out a name tag and discuss any housekeeping such as bathrooms, breaks, etc.

Slide 2:



B. Agenda

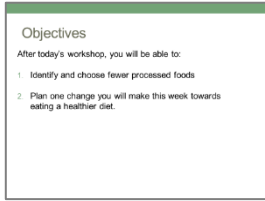
Let's review our agenda for today's workshop.

- We will start with a basic framework for talking about healthy eating, namely USDA's MyPlate.
- The bulk of the workshop will be devoted to learning about whole versus processed foods, specifically what they are and how to eat more of them.
- We'll discuss some tips for cooking healthy meals.
- We will have time to put what we learned into practice.
- And finally, we will wrap up by discussing some additional resources you can use to continue learning and answer any questions you have.

🕒 If short on time, ask participants to hold their questions until the end of the presentation.

Slide 3:

C. Objectives

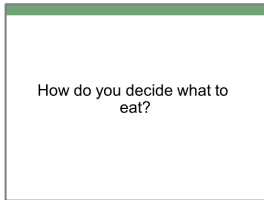


After today's workshop, you will:

- Identify and choose fewer processed foods
- Plan one change you will make this week towards eating a healthier diet.

Slide 4:

D. Activity



🕒 ***If short on time, do this activity as a group brainstorm instead of in pairs***

Before we dive into the information we have to share today, I want to hear from you. How do you decide what to eat?

Turn to a person next to you and share the answer to this question.

Allow three minutes for pairs to discuss. Then, ask if one to two people would like to share with the whole group what they told their partner.

Thanks for sharing. There are lots of strategies that we use when we decide what to eat. Throughout today's workshop, we will be sharing some broad strategies you can use to make healthier choices.

2. MyPlate (10 minutes)

Slide 5:

A. MyPlate



To get started, we are going to talk about a basic framework, or guidance for eating. By show of hands, who recognizes this image?

This is the USDA's food guidance system for the country and can be used to guide your food choices.

The plate represents each of the five food groups which are fruits, vegetables, protein, grains and dairy. The plate shows how each of the five food groups fits into a healthy meal.

The concepts represented in this plate are:

- 1) **Proportion:** What do you notice about how each food group is represented on the plate? *Wait five seconds for responses.* The five food

groups are represented in different proportions that can be used to guide how you plan what types of foods are in your meals. The recommendation is to make half your plate fruits and vegetables; a little more than a quarter of your plate grains, choosing whole grains at least 50 percent of the time, and less than a quarter of your plate lean protein foods. Dairy foods are a good accompaniment to meals, and low-fat plain dairy foods are recommended for anyone over two years of age.

- 2) **Variety:** The meal represented on the plate contains all five food groups. While it may be difficult to eat food from all five groups at each meal, it's important to include foods from each food group in the meals and snacks you eat throughout the day. Eating a variety of foods every day allows you to get all the nutrients your body needs.

Slide 6:

B. My Plate Planner



This is an example of what My Plate might look like with real food. What else do you notice about this plate? *Wait five seconds for responses.* Water is present and sugary drinks are not. It's easy to eat too many calories from added sugars in a day. Why waste them on a sugary drink?

Slide 7:



Plate Planners are available on the New York City Health Department's website in a variety of languages that highlight different cuisines. Plates are available in Punjabi, Korean, Bengali and Filipino. You can access them by visiting nyc.gov/health and searching for "keep on track plate planners".

What else do you notice about the food on these plates? *Wait five seconds for responses.* There are many food choices you can make within each food group. One thing they all have in common is that they all contain minimally processed foods. Let's talk about what that means.

3. Whole versus Processed Foods (30 minutes)

Slide 8:

A. What Are Whole Foods?



Let's review a broad strategy for healthy eating. Choosing whole and minimally processed foods more often than processed foods is one way to eat healthier.

Whole foods are foods that have had nothing added or taken away. When food is processed, unhealthy fat, sugar and salt usually get added. All are ingredients that can contribute to your risk of developing a chronic disease. Vitamins, minerals and fiber are all components that contribute to the nutritional value of foods and usually get taken away during processing.

Some examples of whole foods include fresh fruits and vegetables, whole grains, nuts, legumes and eggs.

You can think of all foods as being on a spectrum of whole foods to highly processed foods. We all eat foods from the entire spectrum. But, choosing to eat mostly whole foods or minimally processed foods is a strategy you can use to eat healthier. Let's go over the MyPlate food groups and look at this concept in more detail

Slide 9:

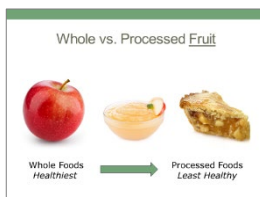
B. Fruits and Vegetables



Let's do a quick activity to understand a bit more about whole versus processed foods. Here we have three apple-based foods: an apple, apple pie and unsweetened applesauce. Turn to the person next to you and decide how to put these three foods on a spectrum from whole foods to processed foods. *Allow participants to discuss amongst themselves for two minutes. Who would like to share the order of these three apple-based foods? Validate responses, then reveal correct order.*

Slide 10:

As you can see, the apple is the most whole food and the healthiest of these three options. The most processed food is the apple pie which has a lot of added ingredients that increase the amount of sugar, salt and fat it contains. The unsweetened apple sauce is slightly processed. The peel may have been removed, and it is mashed or blended to a very soft consistency. But, it can be a healthy alternative.

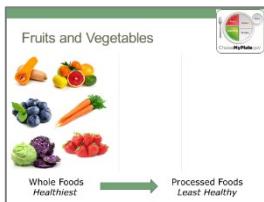


I told you that the apple sauce is unsweetened. If you saw this product at the store, how would you know if it is unsweetened or not? *Wait five seconds for*

responses. You have to look at the Nutrition Facts label and read the ingredients list to find out what has been added. Or, you could make apple sauce yourself at home and control what ingredients you add. Simply peel a few apples, or better yet, leave the peel on, chop them up, and add them to a pot with a little water, and cook them on low to medium heat until they are softened. No need to add sugar.

If the apple sauce was sweetened with added sugars, would it move closer to the apple or the apple pie on this spectrum? *Wait five seconds for responses.* Adding additional sugars makes a food more processed, so sweetened apple sauce would move closer to the apple pie.

Slide 11:



Let's look at how this concept applies to other foods in the fruits and vegetables group. All fresh, whole fruits and vegetables belong on the whole foods end of the spectrum as they are the most whole and the healthiest options.

Where would frozen fruits and vegetables go? *Wait five seconds for responses.*

Slide 12:



Frozen fruits and vegetables go directly next to fresh as they are usually very minimally processed. They typically have nothing added and retain almost all of their nutrients. Similarly, canned fruits and vegetables lose some nutrients during processing but can still be good options and can contribute to a healthy diet.

When choosing canned fruits or vegetables, what are some things you can do to make them healthier?

- Buy fruit packed in 100% juice, not in syrup or light syrup
- Buy low or no sodium canned vegetables
- Rinse canned vegetables before eating

What about when choosing frozen fruits or vegetables? What can you do to choose healthier options?

- Read the ingredients list and choose frozen fruits and vegetables that don't contain added ingredients

Slide 13:

The most processed fruits and vegetables are french fries, potato chips and apple pie. Even though these are made from fruits and vegetables, they are the least healthy for you because they contain a lot of added sugar, salt and unhealthy fat.



Slide 14:

C. Grains

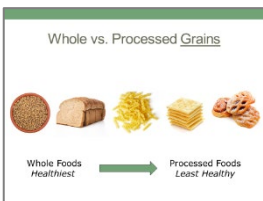
Now let's look at the grains group and do another activity to test your knowledge of whole foods versus processed foods. Here we have some crackers, whole wheat berries, pastries, whole-wheat bread and white pasta. What do all these foods have in common? *Wait five seconds for responses.* They are all made from wheat, which is a type of grain. Whole-wheat berries are the most whole form of wheat. The image we have here looks like a bowl of rice grains. This is what wheat looks like before it is processed and milled into flour for use in other wheat products.



Turn again to the person next to you and decide how to put these foods on a spectrum from whole foods to processed foods. *Allow participants to discuss amongst themselves for two minutes.* Who would like to share the order of these grain foods? *Validate all responses, then reveal correct order.*

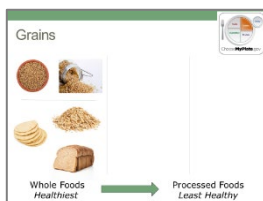
Slide 15:

As you can see, the whole-wheat berries are the most whole food and, in this case, they are the healthiest option. The most processed grains on this slide are the pastries which have a lot of added ingredients such as sugar and unhealthy fats, making them less healthy for you.

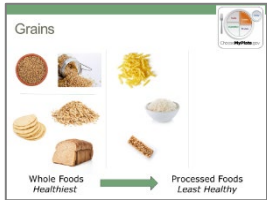


Slide 16:

Let's apply this concept to other foods in the grains group. Some more examples of whole-grain foods and products are shown here. On the top are brown rice and wheat berries, which are examples of unprocessed whole grains. Right under the oats, which are flattened oat seeds, corn tortillas and whole-wheat bread. These are examples of whole-grain products that are minimally processed. All are the healthiest options within this group because whole grains provide the most fiber, vitamins and minerals.



Slide 17:



As grains become more processed, such as in white pasta and white rice, they lose some nutrients, such as fiber. But, they can still contribute to a healthy diet. The white pasta and white rice are in the middle as they are lightly processed and made from refined grains rather than whole grains. Granola bars are also in the middle, but their ingredients determine where they go on the spectrum. Some granola bars are made with whole grains, nuts and dried fruit. Others have a lot of added sugar. Reading the label is an important strategy to use when choosing foods like granola bars.

Slide 18:



The most processed grains, like pastries and sugary cereals, are the least healthy for you because they can contain a lot of added sugar, salt and unhealthy fats.

Less processed foods, like white pasta and white rice, are made from refined grains rather than whole grains. Let's explore what that means on the next few slides.

Slide 19:

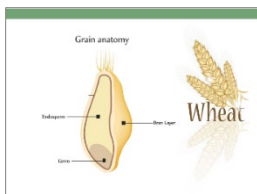


Grains are the seeds of some plants. This picture is what a rice plant and rice grains look like.

Examples of other grains are:

- Wheat
- Oats
- Rice
- Bulgur (which is cracked wheat)
- Barley
- Corn
- Quinoa
- Buckwheat
- Amaranth
- Sorghum

Slide 20:



This picture shows a wheat plant and individual wheat grain. This is what a whole-wheat berry looks like up close.

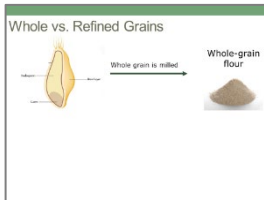
All grain kernels, or seeds, consist of three main parts:

- The outer shell, called the **bran**, contains fiber, B vitamins, protein and small amounts of minerals.

- The inside section, called the **endosperm**, contains mostly carbohydrate and some protein and small amounts of B vitamins.
- A small section, called the **germ**, contains B vitamins, vitamin E, trace minerals and phytonutrients.

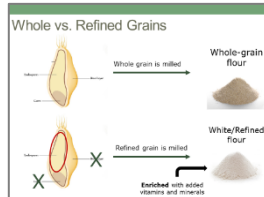
Whole grains are foods made from the entire grain seed. For example, brown rice consists of the entire grain of rice. You get all the benefits of eating whole grains when you eat brown rice.

Slide 21:



To make flour, the entire grain is milled to give us whole-grain flour that is then used to make whole-grain products such as whole-wheat breads and pastas. The benefits of eating whole grains are retained in these products.

Slide 22:



To make refined, or white flour, the outer bran layer and the germ are removed. Only the endosperm is milled to make white flour. When the bran and germ are removed, fiber and other nutrients are lost during this process. This white, or refined, flour is used to make refined -grain products such as white breads, pastas, cereals and pastries.

By law, refined flour must be enriched by adding back key nutrients (e.g., B vitamins, iron and folic acid) that are lost during the refining process. But fiber is not added back and this is a key nutrient we miss out on by choosing refined grains more often than whole grains.

Since whole grains are the healthier option, the Dietary Guidelines for Americans recommends making at least half your grains whole grains.

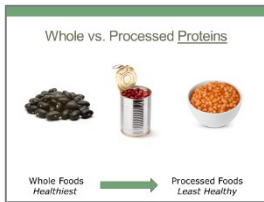
Slide 23:

D. Proteins



Let's move on and take a look at the proteins group. Here are three examples of different bean products – baked beans, canned beans and dry beans. Talk with your partner and decide how you would put these foods in order from whole foods to processed foods. *Allow participants to discuss amongst themselves for two minutes.* Who would like to share the order of these protein foods? *Validate responses.*

Slide 24:



Dry beans are the most whole food because nothing is added or taken away. You might add some salt during the cooking process, but generally that's it. The most processed bean product is the baked beans which have added sugar, salt and unhealthy fats. The canned beans are in the middle. Let's talk some more about the canned beans.

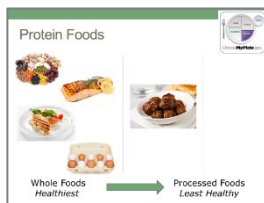
Canned beans can be a good option. Sometimes very little is added to canned beans, making it almost as healthy as the dry beans. What is often added that we have to watch out for? *Wait five seconds for responses, then share answer:* Salt is often added to canned beans and other vegetables as a preservative. What can you do to get less salt from canned beans and vegetables? *Wait for responses, then share answer:* You can look for beans and vegetables with low or no salt added. You'll need to read the labels to find out how much salt is in your product. You can also rinse canned beans and vegetables before cooking or eating them

Slide 25:



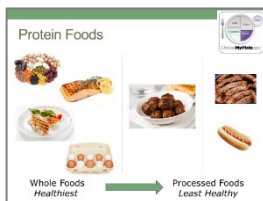
Here are some more examples of whole proteins. They include nuts, beans, fish, chicken breast and eggs. These are generally the healthiest options because they are the least processed. Choose lean meat to limit unhealthy fat intake.

Slide 26:



As protein foods become more processed, like meatballs that you might make at home, they become less healthy but can still have a place in an otherwise healthy diet.

Slide 27:



The most processed proteins, such as bacon and hot dogs, are the least healthy options because they contain a lot of unhealthy fat and salt.

One thing to note is that the way you cook and prepare your food plays a huge role in how healthy it is. This generally applies to all the food groups and we will explore cooking methods a little bit later in this presentation.

Slide 28:



E. Dairy

Finally, we're going to look at dairy. The whole versus processed rule gets a bit more complicated. In the case of dairy-based foods, processing can sometimes make them healthier. For example, processing cream to remove some of the saturated fat gives us whole milk. As more saturated fat is removed, the milk becomes lower in fat and lower in calories, making it healthier.

Skim and low-fat, plain milk and yogurt are recommended for anyone over two years of age as they provide calcium, vitamin A and D, protein, less saturated fat and fewer calories than other dairy products.

Note to facilitator:

Participants may express that they have heard conflicting information about dairy foods, saturated fat and whole milk. You can address their concerns by saying that, until more research is completed, the Dietary Guidelines for Americans still recommend that anyone two years of age or older consume low-fat or fat-free dairy.

Slide 29:



The least healthy dairy-based foods are those with a higher fat content and with more added sugars and salt. These include ice cream, flavored yogurt and processed cheeses. You should eat these foods more sparingly.

Slide 30:



Now that we've explored whole versus processed foods within each food group and talked about My Plate as a framework for eating a healthy diet, let's talk about strategies to eat more whole foods.

Because all fresh fruits and vegetables are whole foods, buying and eating more fresh fruits and vegetables is the easiest way to eat healthier. And remember, frozen fruits and vegetables are great choices too.

Another strategy is to eat whole foods instead of processed foods at snack time. This can include whole fruits, carrots, nuts, hard-boiled eggs and plain yogurt.

Cook at home more often. Cooking at home allows you to eat more whole foods by giving you control over exactly what is going into your food.

How would you identify whole foods to cook with when you're shopping? *Wait for and validate all responses. Then reveal next slide.*

Slide 31:

Strategies for Eating More Whole Foods

- Buy and eat more fresh fruits and vegetables
- Eat whole foods at snack time
- Cook at home
- Read ingredient lists and Nutrition Facts
 - Look for "100% whole" on package or "whole" as first ingredient
 - Choose products with short list of ingredients
 - Stay away from products with a lot of unrecognizable ingredients
 - Check for added sugars in the ingredients list
 - Look at sodium, saturated and trans fat
- Start with outside aisles of supermarket

When food shopping, use the ingredient lists and Nutrition Facts label to find out what's in the food. Here are a few tips:

- When purchasing grains, look for 100 percent whole on the front of the package or "whole" in the first ingredient in the ingredient list.
- Ingredient lists should be fairly short. Frozen corn should just say "corn". Try to buy items that have a short list of ingredients.
- Stay away, when possible, from products that have a lot of ingredients that are not easily recognizable to you.
- Check for added sugars in the ingredient list. Added sugars may be called high fructose corn syrup, brown sugar, fruit juice concentrate, honey or many other various terms. Avoid foods with these ingredients close to the beginning of the list. This indicates that the product has a lot of added sugars.
- Review the sodium and saturated and trans fat content of food on the Nutrition Facts label and choose foods with less than 5 percent Daily Value for these nutrients

When grocery shopping, start on the outside aisles of the supermarket. This is where most of the whole foods are.

Slide 32:

Tips for Cooking at Home

- Cook large amounts and save for future meals
- Remove visible fat from meats
- Keep the peel on fruits and vegetables
- Use healthier cooking methods
 - Examples: Steaming, stir-frying, grilling, baking, roasting
- Use herbs and spices to flavor food
- Use MyPlate to plan meals
- Balance processed foods with whole foods

As we said, cooking at home is a great way to eat healthier. If you can cook more at once, you can save time later. Try making big batches when you have time and freezing foods or using leftovers for another meal. We mentioned earlier that how you prepare your food can play a large role in how healthy it ends up being. Here are some tips for preparing your food in a healthier way.

- Remove visible fat from meats and skin from poultry
- Keep the peel on fruits and vegetables
- Wash fruits and vegetables well before eating or cooking
- Use healthier cooking methods such as steaming, stir-frying, grilling, baking and roasting
- Use herbs and spices to flavor food instead of salt
- Use MyPlate to plan balanced meals
- Balance processed foods with whole foods

4. Let's Practice (5 minutes)

Slide 33:



A. Activity

Now let's put the information we covered during this presentation into practice. Here is a blank image of MyPlate. Draw a circle to represent this plate on a sheet of paper.

Using the strategies and concepts we learned today, draw on the blank plate a healthy meal that you would like to eat. Think about the concepts we discussed including eating more whole foods, eating a variety of foods from all five food groups and using healthy cooking methods.

Take five minutes to draw your meal. Then, share what you've drawn with the person sitting next to you.

Allow participants three minutes to draw their meal and discuss with their partner. Who would like to share the meal they created? Depending on the amount of time available, invite one to three participants to share their meal with the group. Thank participants for sharing.

Congratulations, you just practiced meal planning using the concepts we discussed today!

5. Closing (5 minutes)

Slide 34:



A. Resources

To support you in making changes to your diet, here are some resources that are available to you.

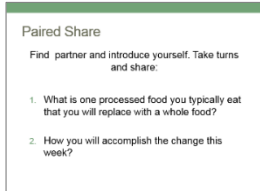
You can visit the New York City Health Department's website at nyc.gov/health to get materials and information. If you search for healthy eating, you will find links to materials including the Healthy Eating and Active Living Guide and a variety of recipes and handouts like the plate planner we discussed earlier.

If you search for farmers markets, you will find information about how and where to access local produce, which is a healthy and delicious way to eat more whole fruits and vegetables. Farmers market maps available on the website will

also show you the locations of onsite nutrition education workshops and cooking demonstrations that take place at select markets from July through November.

The USDA also has a variety of healthy eating resources available at ChooseMyPlate.gov including a sign up for daily tips, handouts and recipes.

Slide 35:

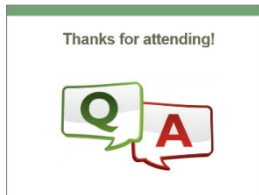


B. Paired Share Activity

I would like you to take a few minutes to think about one specific change you would like to make this week. Find a partner and discuss one processed food you typically eat that you will replace with a whole food and talk about how you will accomplish the change this week.

Allow two minutes for participants to discuss among themselves.

Slide 36:



C. Questions

Thank you so much for attending. I hope this workshop has addressed some of the questions you have about healthy eating and provided some strategies and resources to help you make healthier food choices. Before we wrap up, what are your questions?

Sources:

- 1) U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and U.S. Department of Agriculture. *2015–2020 Dietary Guidelines for Americans*. 8th Edition. December 2015. Available at <http://health.gov/dietaryguidelines/2015/guidelines/>.